

OPINION 121

NECESSITY FOR SUSPENSION OF RULES IN CASE OF *Agasoma*
GABB, 1869, TYPE *sinuatum*, NOT PROVED

SUMMARY.—As the arguments submitted for Suspension of the Rules in the case of *Agasoma* have not been convincing to the seven consulting conchologists and paleontologists who have studied this case, the Commission does not see its way clear to approve Suspension. *Agasoma* Gabb, 1869, type *sinuatum*, is hereby placed in the Official List of Generic Names.

PRESENTATION OF CASE.—Hoyt Rodney Gale, of Leland Stanford Jr. University, has submitted the following case:

In the "Paleontology of California," Volume 2, page 46, 1869, W. M. Gabb described a new genus which he called *Agasoma*. After describing the genus he lists two species, *Agasoma gravida* and *Agasoma sinuata*, both of which he had described as *Clavella* in an earlier part of the same volume, which had been published separately in 1866. In both places *Agasoma gravida* is placed before the other species, and it is mentioned as being "abundant," whereas *sinuata* is mentioned as "a rare shell." There can be little question but that Gabb had the common shell more in mind when describing the genus. The common shell has since then been well-known to all West Coast paleontologists and has become the type of the "*Agasoma gravidum* zone" of the Oligocene. It has been considered the type of the genus by West Coast workers, and other species similar to it have been described; whereas Gabb's two rather poor specimens of *sinuatum* have stood practically alone. However, it being such a generally recognized fact that *Agasoma gravidum* was the type, no one on the West Coast took the pains to state it definitely until English revised the group in 1914 (Univ. Calif. Publ., Bull. Dept. Geol. Sci., vol. 8, p. 245, 1914). In 1922, Trask, thinking *sinuatum* generically distinct, proposed the name *Koilopleura* for it (Univ. Calif. Publ., Bull. Dept. Geol. Sci., vol. 13, p. 157, 1922). In the meantime, however, and many years before English's paper was published, Cossman wrote the type of the genus as *sinuata* (Essais Paleo. Comp., vol. 4, p. 148, 1901). This fact was first brought to the attention of West Coast paleontologists by Stewart who proposed the name *Bruclarkia* for what had been considered typical *Agasoma* (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., vol. 78, p. 399, 1926).

Cossman knew nothing at all about the situation, not realizing that one of the groups is little more than a curiosity, not realizing that the other group is so important that a change in name would be a source of annoyance and inconvenience to geologists as well as paleontologists, who even at that time knew the species of *Agasoma* as important horizon markers, not having heard of the important new species of *Agasoma* previously described by Cooper (Bull. No. 4, Calif. State Mining Bureau, p. 53, pl. 5, fig. 63, 1894), probably never having seen a specimen of *gravidum*, and surely never having seen a specimen of *sinuatum*. Thus Cossman's work is not a revision of the genus, and although the old rule requiring a man to "revise" the group in order to make the citation of the type valid does not hold, there is at least a strong feeling against his method. Cossman clearly should not have taken it upon himself to arrange a

matter about which he must have known so little. It is not surprising that the West Coast paleontologists overlooked a French citation of the type of a genus which is not known outside of the Oligocene and Miocene of California, Oregon, and Washington.

Since the original author must have intended *Agasoma gravidum* to be the type, since it has been so considered by West Coast paleontologists, since the first real reviser of the genus named it as the type, and since it would be a pity to make incorrect so much of our geologic and paleontologic literature merely because of an unwitting blunder, I ask if it is not possible, under the Suspension of the Rules, to cite *Agasoma gravidum* again as the type of the genus?

DISCUSSION OF CASE.—This case has been submitted to the following persons for study and expert opinion:

- (1) Dr. Paul Bartsch, United States National Museum, Washington, D. C.
- (2) Dr. F. A. Bather, British Museum, London, England.
- (3) Commissioner F. Chapman, A. L. S., Museum, Melbourne, Australia,
- (4) Dr. L. R. Cox, British Museum, London, England.
- (5) Dr. Rudolph Richter, Senkenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft, Frankfurt a. M., Germany.
- (6) Dr. T. W. Stanton, United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C.
- (7) Dr. B. B. Woodward, London, England.

The reports from all seven consultants agree on the point that *Agasoma* does not represent a case for which Suspension of the Rules is advisable.

On basis of the advice submitted by these seven consultants, the Secretary is not persuaded that "the strict application of the Rules will clearly result in greater confusion than uniformity," and he therefore recommends that the Commission adopt, as its Opinion, the following:

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Opinion prepared by Stiles.

Opinion concurred in by eleven (11) Commissioners: Apstein, Bather, Chapman, Dabbene, Handlirsch, Horvath, Ishikawa, Jordan (K.), Silvestri, Stiles, Warren.

Opinion dissented from by no Commissioner.

Not voting, seven (7) Commissioners: Bolivar, Hartert, Jordan (D. S.), Kolbe, Neveu-Lemaire, Stejneger, Stone.